



TO THE HONO.
RABLE, AND HIS VERIE
GOOD LL. SIR IOHN POPHAM

Knight, Lord chiefe Iustice of England, and Sir
William Periam Knight, Lord chiefe Baron
of her Maiesties Court of Exchequer,

T. W. hartily wisbeth the abundant
riches of al Gods mercies in this life,
& eternal blessednes in that
which is to come thro-
row Christ.



Hough I doubt not (my good
Lords) but that you haue ere this
heard of the feareful and lamen-
table fire, that in September last
light vpon the towne of Koo-
burne, in the countie of Bedford, and am fullie
perswaded, that according to the measure of
heauenly wisdom, that God hath vouchsafed
to you both you haue made spirituall profit, not
only thereof, but of sundry other such like iudg-
ments past alreadie, in diuers quarters of our
kingdom, and iustly feared, that hereafter may
fall



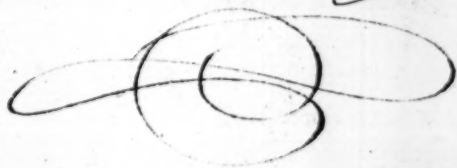
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Thomas Widdows

Narration of the fearfull
Fire that fell
at
Woobourne

Lond. 1595



R Wilcox (F.)





TO THE HONORABLE, AND HIS VERIE
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Though I doubt not (my good
Lords) but that you haue ere this
heard of the feareful and lamen-
table fire, that in September last
light vpon the towne of Wyoo-
burne, in the countie of Bedford, and am fullie
perswaded, that according to the measure of
heauenly wisdom, that God hath vouchsafed
to you both, you haue made spirituall profit, not
only thereof, but of sundry other such like iudg-
ments past already, in diuers quarters of our
kingdom, and iustly feared, that hereafter may
fall



fall out vpon vs for our sinnes: yet because the particularities of that punishment are not so wel and certainly knowne as were meete, mens minds are so various, and fame increaseth by going, as wee say in the Proverbe, besides that euen in these things, likewise there is a trueth fit to be vnderstood, & also because the generalitie of men, either see them not, because they are blind, or els bee amazed at the for a while, because they haue no further insight, or else make not good vse of them, because they are of carelesse hearts, I haue thought it fit, and that vnder your Lordshippes protections, and with your good acceptation also I trust, to publishe though a short, yet a true narration of that pitifull spectacle, and therewithall, some meditations of mine owne concerning that matter begunne within a daye or two after the afore-named fire it selfe, and finished in howe short a space I will not write, least I might seeme to vaunt. In regard of the matter, I haue aimed at nothing but this, that the trueth it selfe being laide open, and some obseruations made thereupon, men might bee lead by the hande to make some profitable vse of it, they being drawne on to repentance for that which is past, and carefully to looke to themselues for that
which

DEDICATORIE.

which is to come, least otherwise the flame of Gods wrath should break forth further against vs, and that to our utter wasting and destruction. For the manner obserued in this discourse, it is not so methodicall I confesse, as it should be: but the reason thereof was the sodaine feare and great grieve, that I conceived vpon the very viewe and sight of the ruines it had made, all making me vnfit indeed for that present, especiallie for matter or manner to handle such a subiect, as it ought, both the one and the other then tooke such a deepe impression in me, and that is the reason also and nothing else I assure you, why I seeme as it were so confusedly to deale in the cause, for how can a dis-tempered mind be fit, especially in methode to propound any matter, sith that to the orderlie deliuerie of thinges, there must of necessitie concurre a quiet hart, and a staied head? Howbeit this I dare notwithstanding protest, that for the bodie of the treatie, there is in it nothing vsound or vncertaine, and therefore in that respect may the more safely be receiued. As for the reasons leading me to present this little labour to your Lordships, though they be many & the same waightie also, yet take them I beseech you, in a worde as it were. You haue

THE EPISTLE

vouchsafed me sundry honorable fauours, and I would not willingly seeme or be thought, either vnmindfull of them, or vnthankfull for them in any dutie that God hath or shalbe pleased to inable me to performe. You execute the iustice of the land, nay which is more, the verie iustice of God himselfe, euen deriued from himselfe, by her Maiesties holy hand and power. How fit therefore it is, that his example should bee set before you, whose person you doe in some sort beare, and whose iudgement also you execute in your functions, that so you might in your places tread also in some good measure in his pathes, your selues can more wisely iudge, than I am able to relate. You both professe the holy gospel of Christ, and may in some sort and sense be reckoned amongst them, that mourne for your owne sinnes, and for the transgressions of the land also. How meet it is, that you and others with you shuld see, that you haue not taken vp this lamentation without cause, as wel for that which is past & present, as for that which is feared to come. But I will repressse my selfe in these thinges, and will not cease according to all the graces that I haue receiued frō God, to commēd these causes into his most mercifull hands, who only worketh wonderful things
both

DEDICATORIE.

both in heauen and in earth, that so turning
 vs from our euil waies vnto himselfe, and kni-
 ting our harts daily more and more vnto him,
 wee may haue assured hope of the bettering of
 our estate in this life according to his owne
 good pleasure, or at the least of the euerlasting
 sauing of our soules, notwithstanding all the
 troubles and turmoiles that may fall out in the
 world. The Lord alwaies and in all things al-
 so direct your Lordships both by his holyspirite,
 and vntill the daye of Christ make perfecte in
 you all good works that hee hath begun for the
 prosperitie of Sion, or the commoditie of the
 common wealth, to his glorie, and your
 euerlasting comforte thorowe
 Christ. London the I. of
 Nouember.
 1595.

Your Lordships bounden and readie euert in Iesus
 Christ, *The Wilcocks*, the Lords vnworthie.

It is with a deep sense of the
importance of this work, and
the high regard in which it is
held by the public, that I
present it to you. I am
aware that it is a work of
some magnitude, and I
trust that it will be
received with the same
favorable notice as
the others which I have
the honor to present to
you. I am, Sir, very
respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. H. [Name]

1792

Printed by [Name], at the [Name] Press, in [Name].

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A short narration of the feare-
full fire, that fell in the towne of
*Wooburne, in the Countie of Bed-
ford, on Saturdaie, the 13. of
September last.*

1595.

Lord Iesus begin and make an ende.



EN, brethren and fa-
thers, yea & whosoe-
uer amongst you tru-
ly seareth God, vnfa-
inedly loueth his lawe,
stedfastlye beleueth
his promises, and sin-
cerely obeieth his wil
to you, and to euery one of you, I say, are the
words of trueth, and exhortation following
directed: not of a hatefull heart I assure you
against any, for I wish & would labour your
good generally, and especially the saluation
of

of your soules, as mine owne: nor yet of a minde curious in other mens causes, with the neglect of them that belong to my selfe, for I know it to bee displeasing before God, and vnprofitable to my selfe, but of an earnest desire in christian charitie, by al meanes lawfull, and that according to my vutermost abilitie, to assay to doe good vnto others, as vnto mine owne soule, and to labour what I can, the setting forth of his glory, that hath created vs and placed vs in this worlde, for that speciall end and purpose, that so at the last also, after we haue a little glorified him here, we might thorough his mercie, and Christs merites, obtaine the fruition of euerlasting life, and the immortall glorification of our bodies and soules, in that great and last day. Wherein, if either thorow the vncleanenes of my heart, or the pollution of my hands, or thorow any other weakenes or want in mee, or of mee, I shall misse of my purpose: or else thorow the carelesnesse, contempt, or any other corruption besides, of those into whose hands this treatise shall come, these poore labors shal not sort these desired effects, I shall for mine own and their transgressions (which are lettes and hinderances to so worthe a worke) mourne

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in my soule in secret, to see or heare the hand of God come forth so heauilie against vs for our sinnes, and yet I shall againe comfort my selfe, as well as I can, not onely in this of heathen men, that in great and hard matters to haue a will is sufficient, but especially in that heauenly speech of the holy apostle, that God (if there be first a willing & cheerefull mind) accepteth vs according to that wee haue, and not according to that we haue not: this being alwaies provided also, that that good, whether it bee of affection, or of action, that wee haue, we haue from him, who worketh in vs both the will and the deede, according to his own good pleasure, and therefore will accept it in vs, as his own good worke, notwithstanding our imperfections and defects cleauing thereto.

What a fearefull fire fell in the towne of *Wooburne*, in the Countie of *Bedford*, on Saturday, as they call it, the thirteenth of September last past, sundrie of the people there felr, to their extreame losses, yea viter vndooing, diuers did behold to their great grieve, and many haue heard of, euen to the sorrow of their hearts. This was so much the more lamentable, not onely because it burnt vp sundrie

arie houses, & baies of building, to the number as I take it, of some hundred and thirtie, one with another such as they were, of dwelling howses, and out houses, as barnes, stables, houels, and such like, but also because it consumed whatsoeuer store was laide vp in the same, as corne, hey, wood, ferne, and such other like prouision, for man and for beast, for the backe and the bellie, to bake and to brew with, and for such other both necessarie vse, and profitable maintenance: yea (which may adde to & increase the pitifulnes of the spectacle, and the very matter of the narration it selfe) not only many things within the house, being almost vterly spoyled, broken to peeces and consumed, as tables, stooles, bedstedes, wainscot, presses, glasse in the windowes, pewter, brasse, copper, leather, and such like, but euen of that which was caried into the streetes to saue it, if it might be, frō the force of the fire, as linnen, bedding, platters, dishes, kettles, much stolen away, and sundrie sortes of ware, of the traders of the towne, as frise, durance, sheewes, and such like, purloyned & imbeceled. By meanes whereof it commeth to passe, that the most of them are greatlie weakened, as in respect of that poore estate
worldly,

worldly, which before they enioyed, yea that diuers of them hauing their store and prouision consumed, and as it were eaten vp with the flame of the fire, hardly haue for theselues, their wiues, children, and seruants, breade to flake hunger, drinke to coole thirst, wood to warme them with all, or houses to hide their heads in, I will not say conuenient (for that were a great mercie in this iudgement) but not such as ouer head, are able to keepe out the raine, snow, and other moysture that falleth frō heauen, or on the sides to beate backe the boysterous windes, and cold ayre, this indeede being rather wrought, by the indiscretion or rage of some, that came in to succor and helpe their distresse, by bursting in peeces the tiles of the house, and breaking downe walles, windowes, glasse, and all (and yet no doubt of it, ment to doe their best in deuours, for ayde and reliefe) than by the violence or vehemencie of the fire.

Many I doubt not, are greatly eger, and greedie as it were, to heare of, and to vnderstand the meane whereby this miserable fire, and fearefull flame was inkindled: which desire of theirs, as I cannot mislike, if it bee free from new fanglednes and curiositie, and haue
this

this adioyned therewithall, that they labour what they can, to make a good and profitable vse of the same: so will I to my vitermost ability, though not in all and euery particular, yet in truth and plainenes, assay to satisfie, and certifie them thereof. A simple old woman, as simple and feelie, as euer I knew almost, slow in speech, deafe in hearing, and which is worst of all, very dull of vnderstanding and sense (named for her age, olde *Ioane*) dwelling in a poore cottage, at the further end of the towne, towards *Brickhill*, hauing shifted her bed strawe, and put new thereinto, laide the olde in the chimney of her saide house, supposing in deede, as she affirmeth, that there had bin no fire in the same. Afterwards going abroad, about some businesse that she had to doe, though verilie they were but meane and small (as such poore folkes haue no great affayres) the cinders and sparkes that were in the same chimney, tooke hold of that straw, so carelesly cast thereinto, and inflamed, and by meanes thereof set on fire that thatched house, and in very short time tooke holde of others adioyning vnto it, that were thatched also, and so proceeded in fearefull both measure and manner, from one to another, till it had

had made that lamentable desolation, that is yet to bee seene. And as this was the beginning of this wofull worke, so was it without al doubt very much furthered, by the absence of sundry the inhabitants of that towne, who being at that time far from home, and abroad in the fieldes about their worldly affayres, could neither so prouidently preuent the rage of that fire, nor so powerfullie put it out, as by all probabilitie they might haue done, had they been at the very beginning thereof. Besides this is most certaine, that the Lord raised vp euen almost at that very instant, a great and mightie wind, to carrie it as it were from one house or place to another (the fire also it selfe, naturally gathering winde vnto it) (as to mee was tolde) was euen made thereby the more forcible and furious, whilst all things, that either they had for defence, or had gotten in for prouision, were so far off from lessening the turie of the fire, that they did rather increase the same. For besides, that the thatch of their barnes and out houses, was greatly dried with much and long parching heate and drouth going before, & so they were the more meete matter, for the flame to set vpon, besides this I say, their corne, their hay, their wood,

wood, their ferne, and other prouision laide
 thereinto, and being very drily inned, as they
 vse to saye, was fit foode for the fire to feede
 vpon, not onely for the increase of the ex-
 treame heate, and violent rage of the fire it
 selfe, but euen to the turning and burning of
 the matter it selfe into dust and powder. And
 not onely the sodaine, but the great pusses and
 blastes of the saide winde also, did carrie
 sparkes & flames from one house to another,
 yea (which is more strange) from the one
 side of the towne to the other: this being by
 the faithfull testimonie of sundry credible
 persons, not onely care, but eye witnesses al-
 so, truely reported, that there was by the vio-
 lence and vehemency of the same winde ta-
 ken vp, from one of the houses so consumed,
 and standing not farre from the Church, a
 flake of thatch inflamed, as broad as it were a
 sheete, and caried quite and cleane over the
 Chauncell of the Church, the schoolehouse,
 and some other housing of the west side of
 the towne, and fell vpon some of the housing
 of the east side of the said towne, where also
 it burned some fiteene or sixteene baye of
 building as I take it. To all this we may adde,
 as meanes to increase this inkindled flame,
 the

the carefulnes of the people, come together out of the fieldes, and their carelesnes also. If any man thinke it strange, that such contraries should either be in one and the selfe same subiect, or further one and the selfe same action, let him weigh, that the care that they had, to carrie some of their goods out of their dwelling houses, into the streetes and other places, least the fire also should haue taken hold thereof, made them carelesse to stop the passage of the fire, which driuen as I say, by the force of the wind, did not only passe speedily from one place to another, but made as it were a glade from the end of the town, on the backside of it especially, euen to the Church or temple yet standing there (thanks be to God) not much decayed or defaced, to the end the people might more diligently resorte and repaire thereto, and more fruitfully profite by the heauenly exercises there performed, than ther haue done, or else God will proceed further, yea more fiercely against it, the towne and all. And which is not of least consequence concerning this cause: Though the people of the countrey came in very louingly and readily, (many of them leauing their owne labours, and freeing their hired workemen

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from

from their taske, and paying them notwithstanding their daies wages) to helpe to extinguish and quench the fire, and indeed though diuers of them wrought and toiled very fore and hard there about: yet some thorow want of experience, in such particular actions and causes, and other some for lacke of good guidance and directiō, (a special remedie doubtlesse in such extreame and dangerous causes) tooke not the readiest and easiest way to stop or hinder the passage of this fearefull flame, but being as commonly people are, in other cases of greater quiet, and therefore no maruaile in this hurly burlie, of many mindes, what thorowe ignorance and strangenes of the sight, and want of experience in such vnusuall actions, confounded in themselves, cried some one thing and some another, and indeede did some one thing and some another, all supposing they saide and did for the best, but indeed, though not of purpose (for I dare not so much as thinke that any caried such bad minds) increased rather the desolation and wast, than any manner of way lessened the same.

In all this lamentable discourse or narration, there are surely many points worthy the obserua-

obseruation and marking: all and euerie one
 whereof directly tende to the manifestation
 of most excellent things in God himselfe, for
 example, his great power, his gracious pro-
 uidence, his perfect iustice, his heavenly wis-
 dome, and mercie more than fatherly, yea
 more than can be spoken or thought of: and
 to the declaration of many foule and feareful
 corruptions, that lie lurking in vs, and altoge-
 ther serue for our Christian admonition and
 instruction, as well for that which is past and
 present, as also for all time hereafter to come,
 specially if wee haue eies to see the wayes of
 God in his works, or hearts to tremble at his
 iudgements, or mindes that can bee affected
 with his fauours, or any grace and abilitie to
 make good vse either of the one, or of the o-
 ther. For tell me I pray you first, was not this
 a plaine prooofe of his power, vpon so small
 beginnings to make so great a flame, and wa-
 sting fire? to execute his iudgement by so
 weake instruments and meanes? to raise vp
 the creatures for the further dispersing of the
 iudgement? to accomplish his owne purpose
 and counsell, in so short a season, and small a
 time? to strike such feare and amazednes into
 the mindes, not onely of weake women and

little children, but of men (who seeme to haue more courage and wisdom) that their heads should not be able to deuise what were most profitable, nor their hands fit to execute anie thing to speake of in comparison? If any and euery one of these be euident declarations of his might and maiestie, what then are al these together, but strong instruments more effectually to perswade our hearts in his all-working and almightie power? And dooth not this shew his wonderfull prouidence, that he did not onely beare the persons of all and euery one of them, as it were vpon the wings of his gracious goodnes, so as wee may by a manner of speech saye, and confesse it to the glory of his name, and the strengthening of our perswasion in trouble against time to come, that not one of them did so much as dash his foot against a stone, but spared much of that, that the fire had, as wee may say, laid handes on, and the flame no doubt, would haue consumed that, that it had fearefully taken hold of, had not he restrained it, and kept it as it were in his fist? Doth not this argue his iustice, in striking for sinne? he that knoweth Gods nature will easily giue glory to God for it, and confesse the truth. For we know by
the

the trueth of the worde, and our experience and obseruation in the world, that he delighteth not in punishing the sonnes of men, and if their transgressions were not as it were gable ropes to hale downe iudgements, surelie men should neuer taste of this, howsoeuer it might be alwayes in the diuine nature. Nay I will say more. May wee not as well in the maner of the iudgement, as in the iudgement it selfe, yea in the very things striken with his wrath, beholde the hande of God punishing the sinnes of men, in those members and matters, they had most abused to licenciousnesse and euill. Yea to speake more plainly of this particular, was it not a token of wrath from aboue, by site to consume their bread, meate, and strong drinke, that they had prepared against the faire, thereby to put them in mind how they haue offended, yea doe offend (notwithstanding this chastisement and correction) in abusing these blessings to gourmandise, and drunkennes? And doth not this manifest his wisdom, that in that outward iudgement he hath scourged, as sundry prophane and carelesse men, so some also that in some measure, do vnfeignedly feare his name, heartily loue his trueth, and carefully walke

in obedience of his will? And why hath hee done it? Surely that in both sorts, they themselves and al men might see, that if God, as in respect of outward punishment, spare not his owne people (who are as deare to him as the apple of his eye) he will much lesse in this, or that which is to come, winke at the sinnes of the wicked, (for if iudgement beginne at the house of God, as Saint *Peter* saith, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospell of God?) and that his seruants might vnderstand, that therefore they are chastened of the Lord in this life, to the end that the drosse of their corruption being scoured from them, they shoulde not perishe with this wicked world. And as for his mercie, what can wee cast our eie vpon (I will not say, if wee looke vpon it with sanctified and inlightned minds from aboue, but euen in the light of reason or nature) and that in this very desolation it selfe or thinke vpon with our mindes, in which we may not see the glory of it breake forth as the sunne in his greatest brightnes? For if the Prophet *Jeremiah* for himselfe and his people, did frankly confesse it, as he doth indeed, Lament. 3. that it was the Lords mercie that they were not consumed: And the faithfull

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in *Isaiah*, willingly acknowledge, that vnles the Lord of hosts had referued some, though but few, they had beene as Sodom, and made like vnto Gomorrah? Haue not wee as good cause, with vnfained minds and mouths, also to speak and declare the same? More than the one halfe of the towne, by much, was neither touched by fire (how soeuer it was threatned therewith) nor receiued any great losse: and yet I hope they thinke not themselues more righteous than the rest, sure I am they should not imagine any such thing, for euē amongst them that felt not the flame, I am sure there were as great transgressors, as they that tasted of it. And as for them vpon whom the losse did light, and indeede lieth very heauilie, a great part of their dwelling houses, I confesse was fore set vpon & assaulted, yea very much scorched with fire, but yet not destroyed: much also of their goods or housholde stuffe graciously spared, though greatly defaced & impaired. And which is a very rare & strange thing, specially in so exemplary a iudgment, none of them or theirs, in their bodies or persons, hurt with this fearful flame. Nay which is more: of all that confused multitude that was there for needful help and succour, some

running one way and some another, some crying one thing, and some another, some doing this, and some that, and all as if it were a beast of many heads for the time, by reason they were without good guides or gouernement, not one of them all I saye, for ought I heard, waymed or hurt. Surely, if a better eie had not watched ouer them than humane, and a more not onely mightie, but gracious hand vphelde them, than their owne, a thousand to one as wee say in our prouerbe, but that in climbing of houses, beating downe of tiles, occupying of axes, casting of water, (all which and many the like are vsed in such fearefull extremities) euery one besides running thicke and threefold in anothers necke, but that diuers had beene wounded, if not slaine. And yet to the end we might behold, euen as it were without bodily eyes, as well as with the eies of our minde, Gods great and gracious goodnes, not one of so many did miscarrie, or was as we may say, scarce touched at all, with any dangers either deadly or grieuous. What shall we say then? without all controuerisie, he that cannot learne by that which is past, to feare and tremble before God in so fearefull a iudgement, must needes
be

be deemed to haue at the least, a carelesse hart,
 if not benumbed and senselesse. For shall the
 Lion roare, and not all the beastes of the for-
 rest feare? And he that cannot bee thankfull
 for the gracious reseruatiō, that God of his
 meere mercie hath made both of men, buil-
 dings, goods, &c. and that as well for other
 mens as for his owne, may iustly bee said to
 bee of an vnthankfull minde and mouth to
 Godwarde, and of an vncharitable heart to-
 wards his brethren. And whosoever cannot
 vse it to further him in faith vnfaigned, and
 sincere repentance, as in regard of the former
 part of his life mispent, and for carefulnesse
 & circumspection for that which is to come,
 let him doubt at the least if not despaire of his
 present and subsequent condition. For if God
 shall giue vs so liuely documentes as these
 are, and wee not receiue instruction thereby,
 or bee in some good measure bettered there-
 by, both for knowledge, beliefe, and obedi-
 ence, hee shall haue iust occasion to take vp
 that grieuous complaint against vs, which he
 hath done to men of like qualitie and dispo-
 sition, and to say, *Hearken O heauens, & thou
 O earth, heare, for the Lord speaketh: I haue
 brought vp children, yea I haue exalted them,*
 but

but falling away they haue rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the asse his Masters cribbe, but Israell knoweth not, my people consider not. Ah sinfull nation, ah people laden with iniquitie, a very wicked seede, corrupted children: they haue forsaken the Lorde, they haue contemptuously prouoked the holy one of Israell: wherefore should ye be smitten any more, sith you increase your falling away: the whole head is dangerously sicke, and the whole heart languisheth, from the sole of the foote to the toppe of the head, there is no soundnes, but wounds and swellings, and a sore that runneth continuallie, &c. which miserable mischiefes, and grieuous inconueniences, that we may thorow Gods goodnes speedily auoide, as also by the same assuredly attaine the contrary good thinges: it shall bee good for vs to marke, first the hand that striketh vs, lest otherwise not knowing that, we runne whither wee should not, and forsake that we ought to cleaue vnto. Secondly, the causes mouing such exemplary iudgement, because the ignorance thereof may make vs to lay it where wee should not, and to cleere them that wee ought to charge. And lastly, the endes that are aimed at in these chastisements,

ments, because as we are not afflicted without cause, so we are not chastised but to some good and holy purpose.

Hee that thus correcteth men, is even the eternall God himselfe, as we may well see, not only by this generall sentence of the Prophet *Amos*, saying, *Is there any euill in the citie that the Lord hath not done?* chap. 3. meaning by the terme *euill*, the euill of punishment and affliction, and not the euill of sinne and transgression, because God cannot that way (hee is so absolutely good) be an actor at all: but also by the particular confession, that *Iob* the holy man of God maketh, when hee saith, euen of the greatest iudgements almost, that can fall out vpon men in this life: *The Lorde hath giuen, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* And as Gods word doth almost euery where in plaine and audible termes affirme the same, saying, *The Lord doth whatsoeuer pleaseth him, both in heauen, and in earth, and in all deepe places:* so reason grounded vpon religion confirmeth it likewise. For if this be not so, why doe we say we beleue with our hearts, and confesse with our mouthes that God is almightie? Is it not because wee are certainly perswaded
both

both by the will of GOD reuealed in his worde, and by his workes manifested in the world, that no such things as these, are or can bee performed, but by not onely his permission and prouidence (which indeed reach not vnto the actions of God, otherwise than as he suffereth and foreseeeth the same, but to his determinatiō, councell, foresight, or appointment) but by his al-sufficient might and power also, at all times, in all places, and in all things, ruling, yea ouerruling the same, according to the good pleasure of his owne will: which if it were not true, we should in our profession of it, haue been found falsifiers of truerth, and in our perswasions of it, deceiuers of our owne hearts. Neither doth this hinder it (howsoeuer in humane reason it may sceme so) that in the execution of his counsels, he vseth means. For as we are sure, that with meanes, and without meanes, yea and against meanes too, hee can performe whatsoeuer he will, either as in regard of the grieuous punishment of the wicked, or as in respect of the mercifull deliuerance of his owne people (which we may plainly and particularly see, in the passage of the Israelites thorow the red sea, that not only giuing the
way

way, but being as a wal for them on the right hand, and on the left, and seruing of or the drowning of the Egyptians therein) so hee both appoynteth and vseth the meanes, not for any impotencie, or weaknes in himselfe, for hee is the Cod of all might and power, communicating it in great measure to many, and yet hauing neuer a whit the lesse in himselfe, and brideling that that hee hath giuen them, making their rage also to turne to his praise, but that he might the more effectually humble, who being grosse of nature, are hardly brought vnder, or made to stoope, but by such apparant and forcible meanes. And this may appeare, not onely then when he vseth grosse and outward meanes (and yet the same powerfull also) because they better sort with our nature, & more liuely affect all our senses, but euen then when hee maketh the weakest, and the meanest able to effect most great and excellent matters. And therefore vnles we be in sinne hardned as flints, these and such like things, cannot chuse, but pinch and pearce vs very farre. To apply all this to our particular, as purpose, so past, yea and if you will present visitation also: which howsoeuer, as in regard of time it be past alreadie, yet
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are the monuments, & the very cinders thereof so present before vs, that all our senses, sight, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting, may still, yea and I feare me will a long while bee satisfied therewith. Wherein though the Lord vsed the carelesnes and negligence of a sillie poore wretched woman, for the beginning of this punishment, as you haue heard already; and though for the continuance, increase and carrying of it, yea scattering of it abroad, he raised vp a mightie wind, & other instruments and meanes aboue expressed, to serue his own turne with, for the declaration of his maiestie, and the chastisements of the sinnes of the people: yet still if wee haue any grace, we must stedfastly looke vpon him, & vnfeignedly cōfesse, that he as it were alone, hath wrought this great worke. And the knowledge and practise of this poynt dooth holy *Iob* teach vs, and that not onely in matters of the like nature and euent, but in such plaine termes also, as wil admit or receiue no other construction. For howsoever he was not ignorant of, yea by the credible report of his escaped seruants, he knewe well enough, and was perswaded, that the Caldeans, Sabeans, Satan and al, had as it were conspired and
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consented, but yet euerie one, in and about the thinges wherein they were imployed, as for example, in driuing away his cattle, as it had beene a praye or spoyle obtained in iust warre, in the ouerthrowing of that house wherein his children were banquetting, and in the rest of the miseries and afflictions that God was pleased to exercise him withall, yet doth he from the hart, frankly and freely confesse and say, *The Lord hath giuen, the Lord hath taken away*: And to his discomfortable and wicked wife affirme, *Shall wee receiue good at the hand of God, and not receiue euill also?* And indeed if we be not thorowly perswaded of this in our hearts, as by the cleere light of the worde, so by the gracious working of Gods blessed spirite in our seuerall soules, we shall with the blind and superstitious of the world, irreligiously ascribe as they doe, the matters and occurrences that fall out in this life, to fortune and secondary causes, which is nothing else in trueth, but to spoyle and robbe the diuine maiestie of his power, prouidence, wisdom, iustice, and whatsoever therein is most excellent. And if we doe not with a sound mind and mouth, giue glory to God therin, and confesse it to the praise of
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of his name, surely it is impossible, either to minister sound consolatiō to others that are distressed, a dutie that in charitie we are bound to performe towards men, or with patience and comfort to vndergoe our owne calamities and miseries, a cause that we ought greatly to care for, or quietly and confidently to expect a ioyfull issue of them and way to escape therefrom, a matter that we must patiently hope for, or else all will bee nought on our sides. For howe is it likely that a man should quietly indure the crosses and losses that fall vpon him, who knoweth not that they are inflicted, not onely by a superior, but by an absolute ouerruling power, and the same not vsurped, but most holie, lawfull, & iust? or howe can hee so much as thinke of a comfortable deliuerance, that is not well and thorowly perswaded of the almightie power and prouidence of God, who if he worke it not for him, it can neuer be effected? And if hee cannot as a skilfull Phisitian, heale the maladies and sicknesses of his owne soule, and minister consolation to his owne conscience, how shall wee imagine him able to doe it to others? For as for mēs mischieuous minds (if our crosses and calamities come altogether
from

from them) they cannot be satisfied, till wee
 bee ruinated and ouerthrowne: and Satans
 malice specially against Gods people, hath nei-
 ther end nor measure, if it bee not restrained.
 This perswasion therefore, that we are vnder
 Gods almightie hand and power, in whatso-
 euer state or condition we be, being well set-
 tled in our hearts, will vndoubtedly cause vs,
 that in the time of our prosperitie, wee shall
 not be puffed vp in pride aboue measure, and
 in the daies of our aduersitie, not to bee too
 much depressed, but euen for the time pre-
 sent patiently to beate, and for the time to
 come, with comfort to expect and waite for
 such a deliuey and issue out of all troubles, as
 the Lord shall see to be fit for the glory of his
 name, the benefit of his people, and our own
 everlasting good. Whereas without this, we
 shal either with some of the wicked languish
 away in distrustfulnesse, murmuring, and all
 manner of impatiencie, or with other some
 fall to vngodly deuises and shiftes, imagining
 either to haue our necessities satisfied by cō-
 sonage, fraud, force, theft, or some such like
 wicked way, or else that our griefes may and
 shall bee recouered by repaying to witches,
 forcerers, coniuers, and sundry other such

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wicked persons, the practise wherof we may beholde to too many in our time ouertaken withall, and running ryot to that great and grieuous excesse of euill. Wherefore wee may well see and say, that it much standeth vs in hand indeed, yea and greatly importeth all and euery one of vs, to bee rightly and religiously perswaded, as of other grounds & principles of Christian religion, so of this one point particularly, and that not onely for the auoyding of iniquitie and sinne, in louing & liking, in seeking and struiuing to them, who for their grosse and grieuous transgressions, we ought to loath and abhorre, but euen for the faithfull accomplishment of many good duties in pietie towards God, in charitie towards men, and in comfort and patience, as in respect of our selues. For other wise, how shall wee stedfastly trust in, or religiously call vpon him, whome wee beleue not to bee almighty? or how can wee comfort our selues or other men, if there bee any power that is either equall with, or can ouerrule the same?

Nowe wee are to see what causes should moue the Lord, in such fearefull measure and manner, as many times he doth, to exercise & execute

execute his iudgements. Of a truth it proceedeth not of himselfe, and his owne nature, as though hee tooke pleasure in punishing the sonnes of men. For the scripture telleth vs in many places, that hee is as it were of another disposition, namely, slow to wrath, & of great goodnes, and inclinable to much mercie, (for which purpose see Exod. 34. and Psalm. 86.) neither indeede delighteth hee to afflicte his owne creatures, specially man the excellentest and chiefeft of the rest. Some thing then frō elsewhere, must of necessitie draw him and driue him to doe it, or else it could neuer bee performed. From our selues therefore surely, and our most grieuous transgressions, is the first, yea and as a man may say, indeede is the onely cause of all our miserie, of what kinde, sorte, or condition soeuer it bee, either outward in the bodie, or inward in the minde, temporall in this life, or euermlasting in that which is to come. Which because men are not easily perswaded of, nor willingly yelde to (pride and conceitednes concerning some good things in themselves, taketh so strong hold of them, and possesseth them so mightily) God in sundry places of the holy scripture, doth not onely plainly describe the corrupti-

on of mans nature, saying, *The thoughts and imaginations of mans heart are onely euill, euery day from his youth upward: and againe, There is none that doth good, no not one, they are al become corrupt & abominable, &c.* But also by his Prophet peremptorily telleth vs, *that our sins are they that make a separation betwixt the Lord and vs:* and againe in another place, *Thy destruction O Israell is of thy selfe.* For the further cleering and confirmation of which point, we are to marke that God at the first made man, iust, holy, innocent, righteous, &c. but he not continuing in that excellent estate, corrupted himselfe and all his posteritie, who as they were by creation in his loynes, so were they all standing with him in innocencie, had hee stood, and falling together with him thorow transgression. So that nowe it is no more naturall for man, as man, that is to say, vitiated and corrupted as hee is, to breath or speake, than it is for all and every one of them, euery way and euery day to sin. On the other side, God is a God, with whom there can dwell no manner of wickednes, yea whose eies can at no hand behold that which is euill, whether it bee in deuise, or desire, in thought, in word, or in deede. As soone there-
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fore as man hath sinned any manner of waye,
 so soone hath hee plunged himselfe, as in re-
 gard of Gods absolute and exact iustice, into
 most grievous and fearefull iudgements. And
 though God strike not presently therefore (as
 wee see many times, according to his nature
 inclinable to mercie, yea mercie it selfe, hee
 doth with much patiēce and lenitie forbear) **wee**
 must not thinke as the wicked doe, that
 either he doth it not, because he cannot, (for
 what is it that hee cannot accomplish?) or be-
 cause hee careth not for the sins of our soules,
 for wee know that hee hateth sinnes, and sin-
 ners to, but rather to expresse the wonderfull
 overflowing mercie that is in him, waiting
 for mens conuersion if it may be, yea assaying
 to worke it by all good meanes possible, or
 else that forbearing them, and they not amen-
 ding, he way the more sharply and seuerely in
 his iustice punish the for abusing of his good-
 nes, and turning his grace into wantonnes, as
 the Apostle saith. Which thing the world
 either not soundly knowing, or else not sin-
 cerely confessing the same to bee true, falleth
 into fearefull, dangerous, yea deadly extremi-
 ties: sometimes accusing God of iniustice, as
 as that either he striketh them without cause,

or more than by reason of the offence committed, they haue deserued: sometimes they post the cause of their punishment, from themselves to others, supposing that other mens sinnes rather than their owne, haue thus prouoked the Lord: and sometimes againe, they ascribe or attribute all to secondary causes, as to such a coniunction and influence, of such and such planets, to the negligence or reachlesnes of such and such persons, to the strength and power of such and such windes and waters, &c. And sometimes they doe prophanely charge and accuse their miserable mishap or fortune, as they call it, making her with the heathen a God, or goddesse: and sometimes they sling out into one corruption, and sometimes to another. By meanes whereof, they as much as in them lyeth, rob God of his gouernement, as though there were any thing that without him or against him did beare sway in the worlde, and spoile him of his iustice, as though that he, which indeede is the onely iust iudge of the worlde, could doe iniustice or wrong, and forget his long forbearing hande: and so besides that they deprive him of his honour in thankfulness, profite not thereby to amendment, & make other things,
name-

namely creatures, God, & a creator as it were; yea sometimes such things as neuer were in the nature of things, but in mans imagination and conceite onely, and hinder themselves, & it may be others likewise, by their bad example also, from the sight and sense of sinne, yea from religious repentance, and godly sorrow for the same, whereby they might be led vnto amendment of life, not to bee repented of, and plunge themselves into innumerable paines of bodie and soule here, and without speciall fauour and grace of forgiuenes from God (who onely forgiueth sinnes) into eueralasting tormēt in the world to come. Vheras Gods children are so far off from entering into these corrupted courses, that many times before iudgements, I will not say haue seized vpon them, but euen before they haue beene threatned against them, haue yet in the reuerend feare which they haue had in their hearts of them, either humbled themselves, and as we may say, prevented the pouring forth of Gods wrath vpon them: or else at the thundering out of the same, or the first stroake thereof laide vpon them, haue soundly and speedily cast downe themselves at the feete of Gods mercie, in faith vnfainted, and sincere

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repentance, & so if not removed the temporary or outward punishment (and yet vpon their submission, God hath been pleased many times, graciously to graunt the same) haue notwithstanding found fauor from the Lord to vndergoe it for the present with patience and prayer, and sincerely to profite by it (yea indeed to overcome it) to Christian mortification and holy obedience.

As for the ends, why God should strike vs, we must know and beleue, that it is impossible that they should be (whether wee respect them in themselves, or as they proceed from him that is onely good) of any other nature than hec is. For as all his affections and actions are meere and absolutely good, so must also all his purposes, and the ends that he aimeth at be likewise, though alwaies happilie by reason of Satans malice and mans corruption, they bring not forth this effect in man. To make this plaine by some particulars. His loue is absolutelie good, and no man that knoweth what either GOD or nature meaneth, can deny it: for if the loue of earthly creatures, as of parentes to children, husbandes to wiues, friendes to friends, &c. be good and lawfull, then that which is in and from

from the diuine maiestie must much more be so, because it is more certaine, more holy, and indeed infinite, he hauing it also in himselfe, and of himselfe absolutely & perfectly good, whereas others haue it but by communication, and that in measure, and in men much vitiated and corrupted thorow the taint of originall sinne. And yet this so excellently and absolutely good, he laboureth to manifest, as in the correction of all men generally, so particularly of his owne people and children, according to which the spirite saith, in the Apostle to the Hebrewes. *My sonne despise not the chastening of the Lorde, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whome the Lord loneth he chastiseth, and hee scourgeth euery sonne that he receineth: And if we bee without correction whereof all are partakers, than are we bastards, and not sons and daughters.* Wherefore sith in this and such like actions, hee aimeth at the manifestation of his loue, and that is indeede the principall end of his chastisements, specially as in regard of his owne people, it cannot be but good. True it is that flesh and bloud seeth not this, nor thinketh so. The reason is, because their eyes are blind, and their vnderstandings darke. But as

it is not reason, because a blinde man behol-
deth not the Sunne, to conclude, there is no
Sunne: so is it absurd to say, because the wic-
ked worldlings, neither feelee nor feare these
things, therefore they are not. For these are
as all the rest of the things of God, specially
as in respect of his purpose & end, spirituall,
and therefore must bee spirituallly discerned:
but they are carnall, and sold vnder sinne. A-
gaine, in as much as since the deprauation &
corrupting of Gods image, wee are nothing
els but both in bodie and soule tainted with
all manner of euill: and sith that euen since
our regeneration and new birth, wee carrie
about with vs (so long as wee dwell in these
houses of clay, and earthly tabernacles) the re-
likes and remainders of sinne: and we know
by the light of the word, euery where almost
reuealing it, and by the stinging testimony of
our owne heart (which euen telleth it vs eue-
ry day that wee rise vp, and euery night that
we lye down) that sinne displeaseth his blef-
sed maiestie, and God hath appointed punish-
ments and corrections, both outward & in-
warde, as one speciall meane to repress the
rage and power of euill in vs, whilest it scou-
teth from vs the drosse of our corruption,
and

and so mortifying in some measure sinne in vs, fashioneth vs the better and more effectually vnto sanctification (for this wee may assure our selues of, that the decay of the one, is the increase of the other) we may euen thereby see, as if it were in a most cleere and liuely looking glasse, that he aimeth at in these corrections, which he hath sealed, not onely his owne glorie, but our good, both temporall and eternal, in this work of fatherly chastisement and affliction. And this sure cannot chuse but be good also, howsoeuer sometimes by reason of the thicke clowde of our owne corruption, interposed between Gods works and our reformed iudgement, wee cannot so sensibly see, or so plainly perceiue the same; as we would or should. Neither is this al, the bettering of vs in this life, but for as much as our good estate here, is in the purpose and councell of God, yet through his owne mercie and grace onely, infinitely as I may say, to be bettered in the life that is to come, and afflictions doe not only frame vs to obedience in this world, but in some sort pledge vp vnto vs the saluation of our soules in eternall blessednes, according to which the Apostle affirmeth: *We are chastened of the Lorde in*
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this world, that wee should not perishe with the wicked in that which is to come. And againe the spirit in another place sayth: By many tribulations we must enter into the kingdome of God. Men by all this should be perswaded, of the holy purposes & blessed ends of Gods visitation, and earnestly labour by these (sith God also himselfe is pleased by them, to aime at that end, and to effect that grace in vs) to be out of loue and liking with this present euill world, and all the vanities and delights of the same, vsing it and them no further, than as by it and them we may be furthered in more excellent graces, and to hunger and thirst after that eternal felicitie, that is laid vp in the heauens for all those, that in faith, patience, prayer, and other good works, looke for and long after his blessed appearing.

Thus we see what God mindeth to effect by striking vs: but whether these fruites follow in me, let our own practise declare. We are so far off from taking these things as pledges of his loue, that the more he layeth vpon vs that way, the more we thinke he hateth vs. And the reason is, because we measure these matters, not by the line or elne of reason reformed, or religious reason, but by our vnder-
standing

standing much corrupted & defaced, frō that integritie which it had in creation. And then how can we in that darkenes see light, seeing that hindereth vs frō beholding graces more cleere than these, that are to be seene in afflictions and corrections? And if wee cannot see in them his loue, till the thicke scales of our ignorāce be pulled frō the eies of our minds, and vnderstanding, howe shall wee perceiue that he assayeth our good therein, til the same also be remoued and taken away? For as we are hardly perswaded of this, that strokes testifie the fauor of him that soundly & roundly layeth them vpon vs: so shall flesh & bloud neuer yeelde to this, that blowes better vs, till the hearte specially inlightened beleue the same, and wee know either by experience in our selues, or by obseruation in others, that they haue not by nature, but by grace, gained that glorious issue. The like may wee say of pledging vp vnto vs the hope of heauen. For what man, if hee haue not more in him than man, will imagine that so harde a measure of afflictions and sorrowes, as lie not onely vpon the backs, but are in the soules of men, yea godly men, should testifie vnto them such heauenly graces? wee rather say and see, that the
father

father that beateth the child much and often, hardly mindeth to giue him the inheritance, and to make him Lord and heire of all. Howbeit Gods word telleth vs, that it is far otherwise with Gods elect : for if wee suffer with Christ, wee shall raigne with him, and being made conformable vnto him in his afflictions, wee shall also bee like him in glory, wee knowing that the momentany and light afflictions of this life, doe cause vnto vs, or bring with them a farre most excellent and eternall waight of glory. Nowe whether in these points it be better for vs, to belecue God and his holy worde, or to trust our owne reason, and humane iudgement, I had almost said, let all the world iudge, but let the godly especially speake their mindes, and deliuer their sentence according to truth and right.

Whatsoever hitherto hath beene deliuered, concerneth especially, either the narration it selfe, and the thing done as we say, or els some profitable pointes arising therefrom, or appertaining thereto. All which no doubt of it, are profitable, if they bee laide to heart, to build vs vp in knowledge and iudgement. But there is another thing besides, that as in all causes generally, so particularly in this, wee must

must carefully labour to attaine to : and that is conscience of the things that wee know, & care to profite by them, to the bettering of vs in this life before God and man, and in our owne hearts also, that so in the comfortable feeling of it, we may haue assurance of hope and heart, that we shall not be confounded in that which is to come. And to this we cannot come or bee brought, but by making speciall vse of and particular applying vnto our owne soules, the points of instruction, or the seuerall and sundrie actions that God doth for, or amongst the sonnes of men. Without which indeed, as in the publike ministrie, all paines taken is but labour lost, and as it were wordes spoken in the aire, as the examples of former ages, and the experience of our owne times, doe but too sufficiently shewe : so in al priuate doctrines or documents, whether they be deliuered by the audible voice of man, or propounded vnto vs by the workes of God, in his mercie towards his owne people, or in his iudgements towards the wicked, will bee at the most, but as a wonder of nine daies, as we say in the Prouerbe, and like vnto water spilt vpon the ground. True it is, and I am sure euery good man will confesse it,

it, that neither the one nor the other, can indeed, either do vs good in this life, or further vs vnto eternall saluation (to make vs without excuse and defence before God, and in our selues, I denye not, but some power they haue) otherwise than as they are sanctified, by the almightie working of the blessed spirite. And therefore, when, or where, or howsoever God dealeth with vs, we should presently and vnfaignedly humble our selues in prayer, and call and craue for grace to profit thereby. Howbeit though that I meane the gracious worke of Gods spirit in our hearts, be a principall meane of our spirituall profiting, yet neither is it the only, neither indeed doth it follow thereupon, that the others aboue recited, should be reiected or refused. For euen as in our naturall life, the first and chiefe cause of all is God himselfe, who as he giueth it vs, so vpholdeth it and maintaineth it, according to his good wil, that being here true that the Apostle saith, *In him we liue, we moue, & haue our being:* and yet no man so vnwise as to refuse meate, drinke, cloth, sleepe, and other necessary helps and aides that way, for that were to tempt God, and to liue (if some one or other could doe it) rather a miraculouse than a

naturall life, so in our spirituall life, though God by his holy spirite worke all in all, in the hearts of them that he hath marked out vnto eternall blessednes, yet no man that feareth God, or careth for his owne saluation, neglecteth, much lesse despiseth the worde, sacraments, prayer, admonitions, exhortations, rebukes, publike, priuate, &c. but more carefully frequenteth, and more religiously vseth the same, and laboureth more to treasure the vp in his heart for goodnes, than hee doth all or any of the outward things, appertaining to the body or naturall man. And euen so is it in this case, of applying to our purpose, and making vse in our soules of the waies and works of God, generall or particular, open or secret. To that therefore wee come, as indeed vnto the life and soule of the other things before going, and therein direct our speech, as first to the whole land generally, who vpon euery such particular occasion should make speciall profite, as well because all the seuerall members in a kingdome, or in a Church, make but one politicall or ecclesiasticall bodie, and therefore if one suffer, all should suffer, and if one reioyce, all should do likewise, as also because some in Gods purpose and iudgement

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are stricken, that all or many others, at the least might amende, because all haue sinned and gone astraye, and stand in neede of the grace of God. And this is that surely that our Saviour meaneth, when in the Gospell hee saith, were those Galileans, whose bloud *Pilate* mingled with their sacrifices, greater sinners than all the other? I tell you nay, but except ye amend your liues, ye shall all likewise perish: so secondly to the particular persons, and places touched & afflicted with this present and fearefull iudgement, who if others, then they much more, shoulde vnfainedly stoope downe, and hartily and hastily also humble themselues, vnder the hand that hath stricken them, by how much not only in their own knowledge and conscience, their sinnes are greater than other mens, but also because the punishment was present in their eies, fell vpon their bodies, goodes, and houses, and shoulde (which whether it doth yea or no I know not, but if it do not, I pray God it may) more effectually therefore pearce and enter into their soules and spirites, for all time, present, and to come. What a mightie hande of God hath gone forth against the whole land, by manifold and fearefull fires in the severall
quar-

quarters and corners of it? which whosoever will but seriously thinke vpon them that are past, & recall to memorie those that howsoever men forget them, are yet fresh, and as it were bleeding in the harts and eies of them that feare God, hee cannot chuse but see and confesse strange and wonderfull iudgements. In some particulars behold the rest: the burning of Beckles, the wasting of Nantwich, the consuming of Marleborough in the west, and which though it come in the last place is not the least iudgement, the destroying of Stratforde vpon Auon twise in one year, with that great and grievous punishment. Nay let vs proceede further, London the blazing beacon to the whole lande, and the mother citie of all the kingdome, hath bin made thotowe the iustice of God against it for sin, a fearefull spectacle of Gods wrath to others, not onely while diuers priuate mens houses, goodes and possessions haue beene defaced thereby, but while the steeple of their cathedrall Church (a place that many imagined for the deuotion and holines of it could not haue been touched with any such iudgement) was not onely inflamed and consumed it selfe, but ministred matter of feare also, and that not

without good cause & respect, that it would haue fired the whole citie it selfe. Sundrie other sortes of iudgements hath God exercised that famous place, and the whole lande withall, as with that infectiue and destroying sickenesse the plague or pestilence, that noy-some disease of the small pocks, meafels, &c. great penurie and scarcitie of victuals, and by meanes thereof and together with the same, a generall dearth of all thinges, belonging either to the pleasures or the profits of this present life: to which also adde the threatening of the sworde for a fearefull inuasion, and the feare of domesticall stirres to disturbe our long and happie peace, with infinit others, according to the innumerable multitude of sins and transgressions multiplied against his maiestie, the very sting whereof standeth vp in our soules to accuse vs euery night when we lye downe, and euery day when wee rise vp. And yet who hath, I will not saye soundly profited by these things, for vnfained humiliation before God, but thought seriously vpon them for the bettering of vs, or for any other good respect before men in the worlde. Certainly whosoever will looke into these things with a single eye, I doe not thinke the

contrary, but hee shall clearely perceine, that whatsoeuer iniquitie was in any particular person, state, or degree amongst vs, or whatsoeuer disorder was either in church or common wealth, it resteth notwithstanding this hand of iustice and iudgement gone forth against vs still vntereformed: as though wee thought that God in heauen did not either beholde our sinnes, or did strike vs without cause, or as though there were no ende why hee did punish vs. And though it bee true indeede, that in the midst of these iudgements, he hath remembred mercie, and hath not let his wrath lie hard vpon vs, lest we also might reach out our hands to iniquitie, but hath giuen vs great abundance of manifold fauours, turning our sickenes into health, our penurie into plentie, our dread of danger and distresse into all manner of holy ioy, and ouer and besides hath bestowed vpon vs the blessed light of his holy worde both in the publike ministerie & priuate exercises of it, the very knowledge and light of it breaking forth as the flowings of the sea, if wee could so haue accepted of it: and all this hath bene done to this end, that we might haue bene led by the lines of loue, and cordes of meane, to haue wal-

ked more vprightly and carefully with the Lord, who is the God of our life, and of our health, and of our peace and all: yet haue we misled by the malice of Satā, and thorow the corruption of our owne hearts, and deceiued by the pleasures of sinne, which indure but for a while, lift vp our heeles and our hands against him, and hardned our hearts and our faces against all his waies, in all his workes, either of mercie or of iudgement, for he that was filthie, is filthie still, and all the abominations of the land (vnder the burden whereof also the very earth it selfe groaneth, and therefore men should much more mourne, if they were not senseles and graceles) are so farre off from being lessened and diminished, that they daily increase and get head amongst vs and ouer vs, which whosoever wil but in vprightnes of heart and iudgement, in the particulars consider of, cannot but giue glory vnto God, and herein acknowledge and confesse the trueth. As for the pride of the lande, it is increased, not onely by the excesse and abuse of our commodities at home, but by bringing in of forraine wares, and olde and newe fond deuises, which in the finenes and in the varietie and vanitie of them, do ouer and besides wast

wast and weare the wealth of our own countrey, our golde, siluer, tinne, lead, and other things of worth and durablenes, being transported for such trumperie. Gluttonie and drunkennesse, I thinke, did neuer so much abound, no not when England had the name for great hospitalitie and housekeeping, there being come now in the steed of it, not onelie amongst the poore, but amongst the rich, noble and all, either no housekeeping at all, or the same so pinching and miserable, as not onely the poore being readie to starue in our streetes, crie out of it, but euen the very maniall seruants, many times doe very bitterlie, and that not without good cause, complaine of the same also.

Touching the extortion, oppression, bribery, vsurie and other iniquities that euery where amongst high and low do daylie preuaile, what shall we say, the very stones in the streete, and the beastes in the fielde, and other dumbe and insensible creatutes, though men should hold their tongues, doe in their kinde, serioufly crie out against it and saye, euen as the Prophet did in his dayes, Iustice is turned into gall and wormewood, and the poore are bought and solde for siluer, and the needy for

whores: whoredome and filthie life, in al sorts
 and degrees of men, both openly and secretly,
 did neuer so much ouer flow and increase
 as at this day. The ciuill Magistrate saith, ei-
 ther he hath no law to punish it, or correcteth
 it at the most with a simple whipping: and as
 for those that haue the ecclesiasticall censures
 in their hands, they surely haue no will to do
 it, but vse their authoritie rather to picke
 mens purses, than to instruct their consciences,
 and to conuert men ynto God. Yea, I
 wish with al my heart, that euen the very mi-
 nisters themselves, to whom for ought I see,
 there is no other thing left to repress euil by,
 than crying out against iniquity, were not in
 this as in other matters of as great conse-
 quence tongue-tied and mute, or else as the
 prophet saith in another place, that they were
 light and wicked persons, and had polluted
 the sanctuarie, and wrested the lawe. To re-
 hearse all transgressions in the seuerall sortes
 and particularities of them, would be too long
 and tedious, take one therefore, and the same
 as the most common, so the most grieuous,
 that by it we may iudge also of the rest: the
 prophanation of the Sabbath is the sin that I
 meane. Where is the man, woman, or child,
 that

that hath care and conscience publikely to sanctifie it, either by reuerent and religious preparing of themselves to come to publike assemblies as they should, or to repayre thither duetifullie as they ought, or to carrie themselves there as becometh such heavenly exercises of prayer, preaching, &c. What householder, man or woman, what childe, what seruant hath any regard priuately to spend it well in meditation and conference of things publikely taught them, in singing of psalmes, in prayer, in thinking seriously vpon the creatures, in visiting the sicke, in dooing the workes of charitie and christian loue? Or rather who prophaneeth it not in publike, and in priuate, by themselves and in company and in euery place almost: some by thinking it to be a day of bodily rest only, and therefore giue themselves and theirs ouer to sleepe more and longer then, than on other dayes besides: other some making no more account of the holy assemblies of the church, and religious exercises therein, than of prophane and common meetings, nor so much many times, and receiuing the word with no more reuerence & attention than a prophane tale, other some sitting idle at their doores,

line gaping

gaping and gazing, suffering, yea some times
 commanding their seruants and children to
 abuse it, by dicing, daunsing, carding, stoole-
 ball playing, and other vnlawfull and wicked
 recreations: others also poasting ouer their
 worldly affayres, as matters of accountes, re-
 payring to Iustices for execution of law, visi-
 ting and intertaining their friendes, and such
 other worldly things, to that daye, with a
 thousand such like abominations, fearefully
 committed and performed vpon that daye,
 that of all others should bee best spent. For
 these may not wee saye, as the Prophet spea-
 keth in cases of meaner importance: Shall
 not the land tremble for this, and euery one
 mourne that dwelleth therein? Or as another
 Prophet speaketh against the people that de-
 scended fro *Iacob*, for their pride, contempt
 of Gods word, and other iniquities, *Aram*
 before, and the Philistines behinde, and they
 shall deuoure Israel with open mouth, and
 yet for all this his wrath is not turned away,
 but his hand is stretched out still: and good
 reason, for the people turneth not vnto him
 that striketh them iustly for their sinnes, nei-
 ther doe they seeke the Lord of hostes: there-
 fore will the Lord cut off from Israel, head
 and

and tayle, branch and bodie in one day: The
auncient and the honorable man hee is the
head, and the Prophet that teacheth lies, he is
the tayle, with many such other things as fol-
low in that ninth chapter of *Isaiah*, which I
would desire the godly reader, with care to
looke vpon, and in conscience to make vse
of. For who knoweth whether this bee yet,
the day of Gods grace offered, and the accep-
table time if it be receiued? Or who can tell
whether this bee not a foretelling and a fore-
running signe also, that the land may (and that
or euer it be long, for ought we know) bee
consumed with fire from the West, by the
Turke, Pope, Spaniard, & other instruments
of Gods wrath to punish a sinfull and rebelli-
ous nation: All which would bee glad, not
only for the inlarging of their territories and
kingdomes, but euen of hatred more than
cruell, and bloodie against vs to whet their
teeth vpon our bodies and bones, and to bath
their swords in our blood: or else who can or
dare say, that this may not be an assured testi-
monie, that the Lord Iesus shall shortly come
in the cloudes, in a melting and consuming
fire going before him, and destroying all
things, with great power and glory to iudge
the

the quick and the dead? Sin not at the height it is at, doth in full prouoke the one, & with earnestnes calleth for our aduersaries to come out against vs in troopes and armies, and on the other side all signes (if I be not deceiued) that should goe before that great and terrible daye of the Lorde bee accomplished already. Sith things then are so vncertaine, that wee knowe not when nor where, nor how the Lord will come vpon vs, and yet wee cannot but feare that hee is nigh, even at the doore, why should wee deferre with the wicked, cuen therein, or thereby, causing the Lordes wrath to breake forth against vs to our utter confusion: or rather considering that all these things must bee dissolued, why doe wee not make this vse of it, to learne what manner of people wee should bee in holy conuersation and godly life, looking for, & hastning vnto the comming of that day of the Lord, by the which the very heauens being on fire, shall be dissolued, and the elements shall melt with heate? But who (I wil not say practiseth) these things, for the number of such persons is almost as rare in the world as a blake swanne amongst foules) thinketh vpon these things seriously? Surely, surely, the most part bulie
 their

their mindes and their mouthes also farre otherwise: for some giue themselves ouer to filthie and foolish speech, which not onely bringeth no grace or godly edification to the hearer, but rather corrupteth good maners. Other some though they fall not so fouly, yet are ouertaken in their discourses of pleasure, of profit, hauking, hunting, merchan-dise, purchasing landes, &c. which though in themselves they be not euill, yet because they continually put better matter out of place, they are become the sin of their soules. And if it so fall out, that now and then, they or some of them stumble vpon good things, be it either in word or deede, by the motion of their owne minde, or occasion from others, it is certainly but as a flashe of lightening, no man knoweth whence it commeth, nor whether it goeth, and euen vanisheth away, as if it were in the first appearing of it. And therefore surely thorow their sins of ignorance, negligence, carelesnes, contempt & prophane-nes, it is likely that vengeance shall breake forth from the Lord in a grieuous both measure and manner, & fearefully consume both bough and branch, roote and bodie, trunke stocke, and all in a day.

And

And if this bee the state and condition of the generalitie, as indeede it is, what shall become of the particulars, the whole bodie consisting of them as it were of seuerall parts, but that they also must remaine vnder the same iudgement? To you therefore that now are vnder this hand & hammer of Gods heauie indignation is it that I write and speake. Can you deny, but that euen many dayes and yeares alreadie passed, you haue long agoe pulled this and a more grieuous iudgement by much, downe vpon you from almightie God? If you should, the heauens would blush at you, and the earth would beare witnes against you, and testifie vnto your faces, the filthines of your words and workes. Mee thinketh it should bee farre better for you to giue glorie to God, and vnteinedly confesse that it is his singular fauour to haue spared you so long, and that it is his more then common mercy, that ye were not al consumed. What hath been threatned against you out of Gods word, you cannot be ignorant of. What punishments haue light vpon you, by the plague, the small pockes, and now this last fearefull fire, you cannot but feele. What? Hath God stricken you without a cause? Be it far from you,

you, either to speake it or thinke it, for that
 were to condemne the most iust iudge of the
 world for your owne clearing, yea and to go
 against the stinging testimonie which euery
 day when you rise vp, and euery night when
 you lye downe, telleth you the cleane contra-
 ry. But if you should proceede to that height,
 are not other mē that haue watched ouer you,
 & preached & spoken vnto you in the name
 of the Lord, able to cōvince you of falsehood
 to your faces, and to throw the dounge of
 your iniquity vpon your countenances? Giue
 them therefore leaue to declare the truth to
 you, and labour to beare with patience, and
 to profit by the word of exhortation, sith it is
 directed to you for your good, and vnfeined
 humiliation also: for they knowe you, and
 your offences far better than you your selues.
 Perhaps you will thinke this speech strange,
 but deceiue not your owne hearts, I beseech
 you, for if you will weigh, that naturallie we
 are blinde to discerne sinne, and after they see
 it, yet many times they are partiall in their
 owne waies, and euen bleare vp their vnder-
 standing, and harden their hearts, and againe
 that they are more quicke and better sighted,
 to discerne other mens transgressions than
 their

their owne : as also that God reuealeth not
 the sinnes of the people vnto his faithfull ser-
 uants the Prophets by the haltes, I think you
 would, or at the least I am sure you should be
 of another mind. To reckon vp all the par-
 ticulars were harde and impossible, for who
 can vnderstande his faultes? And yet not to
 lay downe some, were to faile in the iustify-
 ing of the charge, which were vniust, and to
 let you alone in your iniquities, which shuld
 be vncharitable. This therefore I say, that a-
 mongst the infinite and innumerable sinnes
 of your soules, there are some particulars that
 haue beene and are most odious before God,
 and most apparant in the view of the world.
 Amongst which I reckon in the first place a
 fearefull contempt of godlines in the most of
 you, and a great and grieuous carelesnesse
 thereof euen in the best. How often and long
 hath God spoken vnto you, by the publike
 ministerie of his worde, in the holy exercises
 of prayer, preaching, administration and par-
 ticipation of his blessed sacraments? If you
 could haue seene your happines in that be-
 halfe, both for the length of them, & the gra-
 ces of the men that God vsed as meanes to
 publish his truth vnto you, your fauors both
 waies

waies not farre inferior to any congregation
of the land, and in these respects indeede go-
ing before many it had beene well: but how
little you haue profited by them, nay howe
carelesly you haue heard them, & how cold-
ly you haue frequented them, your grosse ig-
norance in the grounds of Christian religion
sheweth the first, fewe or none of you being
able to render a reason thereof, to them that
shall aske you, & your sleeping in the church,
talking one with another, and turning of
your bookes there, and vsing of your owne
priuate deuotions or prayers in the time of
publike preaching & prayer, a grievous trans-
gression no doubt proueth the second: and
your dayly and continuall absence therfrom,
and specially vpon the Lordes day then lying
in your beds, haunting of alehouses, riding
and going abroad for your worldly affaires
of pleasure and profite manifesteth the third.
And how weary you are when you are there
let this testifie: none preuent the time of pub-
like assemblies, and some come in the midst
of your exercises, to the great disturbance of
the same, and others that are there: and that
some againe before the sermons are finished,
other some after the prayers made, and be-

fore the singing of the Psalmes, and the vsuall
 blessing to bee pronounced departe thence,
 wherof you as well as they that tarrie should
 be partakers, posting also out of the Church,
 as it were frō a play or may game, as though
 you supposed, that no more reuerence should
 be shewed there than in other places, or that
 some parte of diuine seruice belonged vnto
 you and not other some, whereas in trueth
 you ought to be alike partakers of the whole.
 And how should wee looke for any goodnes
 where this that is the seede of sinne, and the
 nurse of all abominations swayeth so much?
 Surely when men haue once cast Gods lawe
 behind their backes, and haue it not in deede
 in a high and reuerēd regard, what can there
 bee to restraine them from euill? or to direct
 them in good? Nay what shall not then bee
 right and lawfull, though indeede it bee ne-
 uer so corrupt and vile. From this therfore, as
 from a streame and fountaine of filthinesse,
 haue flowed all your othes, particular trans-
 gressions, as first for example your swearing
 and cursing: by the first blaspheming of Gods
 name, and haling down wrath and vengeāce
 from the Lord vpon your selues, your wiues,
 children, familie, friends, yea all the goodes
 and

and cattle that you haue and possesse, for the Lord will not hold him guiltlesse that taketh his name in vaine, and sure wee are that the plague of God shal not depart from the house of the swearer : as also wee may perceiue by the signe of the flying booke mentioned Zachar. 5. in which were contained curses against euery one that sweareth, who also should be cut off as wel on this side, as on that: yea that this iudgement should enter into, and remaine in the midst of such swerers houses, and should consume the same with the timber thereof, and stones thereof. And by the second not onely testifying the malice and madnes of your owne harts, against men and other creatures of G O D, vpon which you powre out the poyson of your mindes and mouthes, but drawing iniquitie with the cordes of vanitie, and sinne as it were with cart ropes, that so that might bee fulfilled in you, that in the book of Psalmes is spoken of the notorious wicked, As hee loued cursing, so shall it come vnto him, and as he loued not blessing so shall it be farre from him : and as hee clothed himselfe with cursing like a rayment, so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oyle into his bones. And by

Both of them defiling the aire aboue you, and
 polluting the earth beneath you, with the
 creatures thereupon, yet by your bad exam-
 ples, infecting and corrupting your wiues,
 children, seruants, and all that haue any con-
 uersation or acquaintance with you, who ha-
 uing nothing to learne from you but that
 which is euill, will in the pronenesse of their
 owne nature to naughtinesse, easily treade in
 your bad steps, and much more easily resem-
 ble you in corruption, than other men in
 goodnes, by how much you doe more nigh-
 ly and straightly by many waies touch them
 than others. And as for your owne idlenes,
 and the bad bringing vp of your youth and
 children, both sonnes and daughters, it is pi-
 tiful to beholde, and I cannot without great
 grieft of heart, thinke or speake of it: what a
 shame before men, nay indeede what sinne is
 it before God, to see amongst you day labou-
 rers and men of manuell occupations (who
 according to Gods ordinance, and his iust pu-
 nishment vpon them for sinne, shuld eat their
 bread in the sweate of their browes, and get
 it as wee say with their fingers endes) haunt
 and frequent alehouses, spending there not
 onely houres, but dayes, and in that time be-
 sides

fides; the neglect of their callings; by which
 they should maintaine themselves and theirs,
 waisting that also which they haue gotten, &
 should be as the reward of their honest labors,
 so the necessary and needfull reliefe of their
 wiues, children, and other at home; where
 they should rather spend it in deede, to the in-
 crease of mutuall comforte amongst them-
 selves, than vpon the sonnes of *Beliall*, and
 wicked and lewd persons in those houses of
 vnthriftines, yea some of them of dishonesty?
 Now for your youth, is it not lamentable
 to see boies and girles, of tenne, twelue, yea
 a fourteene yeares of age, and many vnder
 these yeares also, to swarme in your streetes,
 and to runne vp and downe daily in mire and
 dirt, both wearing out their shooes, and spoy-
 ling their apparell, and that without laying
 their hands to any honest labours to get some
 thing towards their maintenance and reliefe?
 Yea and some of them I feare me that follow
 not this bad trade, worse occupied by much,
 in pilfering, breaking of hedges, learning to
 lie, swear, and make no conscience of anie
 sinne. And as for those few that you seeme to
 put to learning, if you consider the places
 whither they goe, the persons to whome (I

neede not particularize this, for you knowe
 what I meane) and the small profite they take
 thereby, it were almost as small a transgressi-
 on before God and men, to let them liue idly
 with the rest, as to traine them vp in sorte as
 they are. God hath graciously provided far
 better for you, if you could either see it or
 haue care and conscience to vse it well. As
 for your selues, you haue long agoe done
 what you could to put religion from you, by
 offering not onely manifold vnkindnesses to
 the persons that offered it vnto you, but con-
 tempt to the trueth it selfe, and yet though it
 be full sore against your willes, it is by hono-
 rable, and others, and those that loue you, and
 care for you more than your selues, vphelde
 still. And now what goe you about, namely
 to banish learning from you and yours? Per-
 haps you will think it a hard charge, but sure-
 ly it appeareth not vnely by this, that you suf-
 fer your schoolehouse, the place appointed
 for the good bringing vp of your youth, to
 goe to foule decay, but haue no regarde at all
 in a manner that they might attaine to some
 good measure of knowledge in humane lear-
 ning, what will bee the issue consider in a
 word. Contempt of the worde carrieth with


it alwaies all maner of impietie: and lacke of knowledge, breedeth all barbarousnes: and then what can you look for, but euen to haue that fulfilled in you, that the scripture speaketh of a rebellious and stifnecked people, Ephraim shall eate vp Manasseh, and Manasseh Ephraim, and so you to become a sauage and wilde people deuoid of pietie, charitie, religion, righteousness, loue, &c. and filled with all manner of vngodlines and sinne, to which as seemeth to me by your crooked paths, you haue made more than post haste already. And though God by many crosse and losses laide vpon you and yours, labor to stay you therefrom, and particularly hath plagued almost al of you, with great and grieuous pouertie, (more I am sure than many of you will bee knowne of) so that (some few of you excepted) you liue for the most part by shifting, if not vn honest deuises and trades: yet you will not see the hand that striketh you with beggerie as it were, and contempt for your idleness and carelesnes, and so turne vnto him, but shifting it from your selues vnto others, vniustly laye the fault vpon those that in manie respects haue been but too bountifull and beneficial vnto you and yours. And yet I would

even from the bottome of my heart, if GOD
 saw it so good, that your iniquitie and sinne
 had staid here, and had not proceeded fur-
 ther. But surely it is farre other wise with you:
 for as the godly thorow the light of God his
 truth, and the powerful working of his blef-
 sed spirite, are mightilie caried from faith to
 faith, & frō one good work to an other, so are
 you in Satans malice against you, and the
 strength of your owne corruption violently
 harried from one transgression to another e-
 uill, that so that may be true in you, that the
 Apostle speaketh. The wicked must waxe
 worse and worse, and filling vp the measure
 of their transgressions, bee at the last ouer-
 whelmed with his most fearefull and iust
 iudgements. What shall I say of your exces-
 sine drinking, abusing therin and therewith
 that and many other his good creatures, gi-
 uen you sometimes for necessitie especially,
 and some times for delight also, I confesse?
 yea, is it not written in many of your faces
 and foreheads, so that hee that regardeth but
 the rednes of your eyes, the heate of your
 countenances, the swelling of your vaines,
 and sundry such other outward signes of in-
 temperancie, might with small a doe poynte
 and

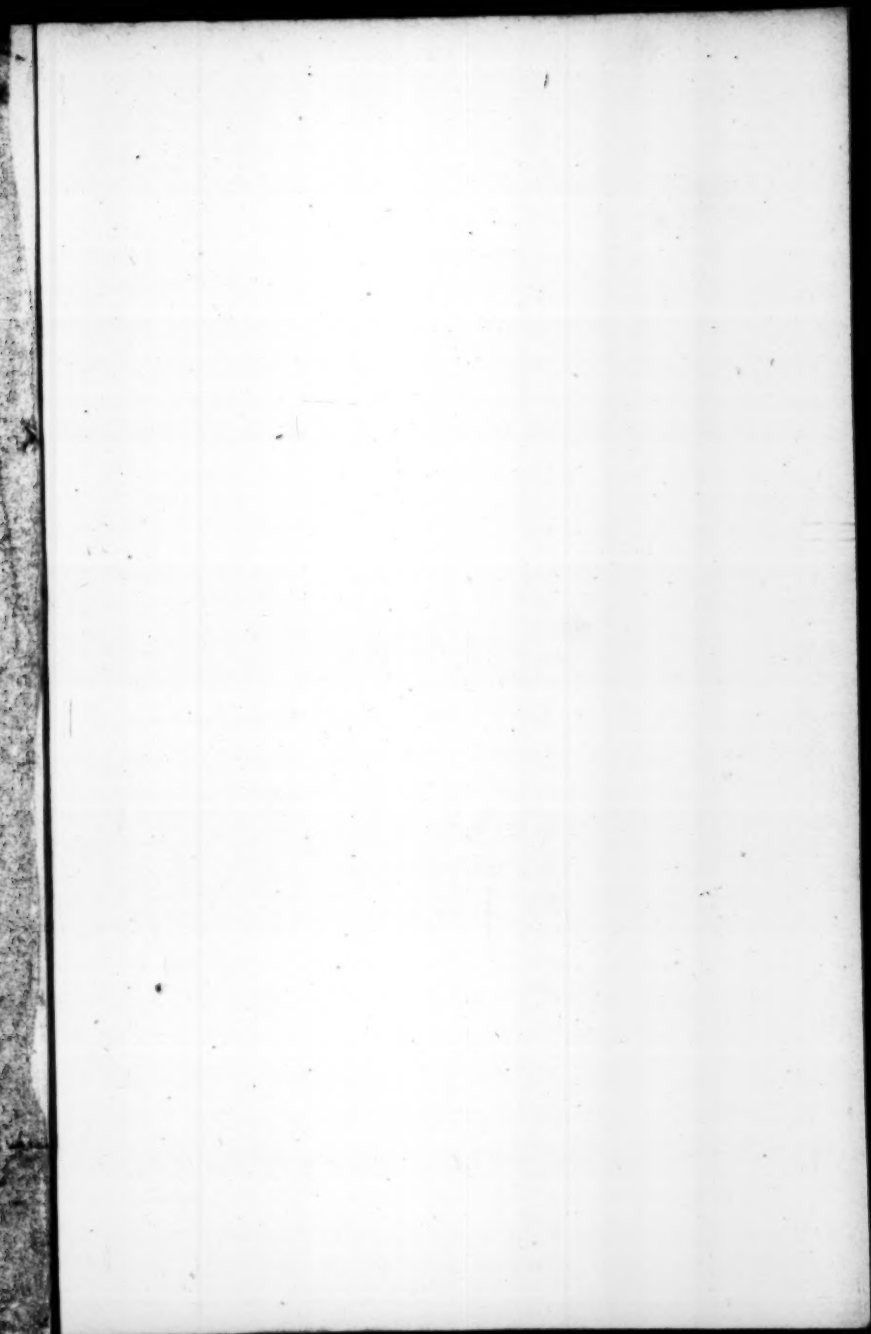
and painte out, what manner of men you are; and as if it were with great capitall letters written in your foreheads, for as bee that runneth may reade the same, see and behold bounding and quaffing written therein? And yet herein is this your sinne amongst others, become exceedingly sinfull, that many of you leaue your owne houses, and go up & down to other places for strong drinke and company, and not contented therewith, you delight to drawe others from townes and places abroad and rounde about you, to be partakers with you of the selfe same iniquitie and that not onely vpon your market and dayre daies, and times of resort, but euen vpon other daies of the weeke, yea vpon the Lords day it selfe, wherein you are so farre off from withstanding euill, that not one of you yet for ought I knowe, hath been found either to repress this foule vice of quaffing and drunkennes in your selues, or to shew your dboxes against them that fall into riot and excesse that way. Adde vnto these, the adulteries, whoredomes and fearefull filthinesses that haue heretofore, and daylie doe fall out amongst you, and then you shall see also, whether God haue causeleslie stricken you, with this and other iudgements:

ments: or whether you haue not indeede good cause for the same, vnfeinedly and speedily to humble your selues least otherwise the wrath begun, proceede and breake forth, to an vner waisting of you and yours. For your secret sinnes that way, I will say nothing, but leaue them to God to whome they are best knowne, and to your owne hearts, which should bee touched with a godly sorrow for them, and for your other iniquities likewise. Consider a little I pray you of your open transgressions, and waigh them for amendment of life. Dilters of your daughters and maid seruaunts, haue beene in former time and of late, shamefully defiled. Your sonnes and other of your families, haue been the authors and the actors of this grieuous villanie, wherein also sundry of them haue growne to this shamelesnesse in their sinne, that they haue gone with out stretched necks, and brazen foreheads, as though they had done none iniquitie at all. Your towne by this mernes too much impouerished alreadie, hath beene charged with the keeping of a bastardlye broode, beside other foule inconueniences that haue followed & flowen from this grieuous transgression. To reckon vp the rest
of

of your iniquities would bee too tedious,
 by these labour to learne, to loth, and to leaue
 them, and all the other whatsoever, &c found-
 ly and speedily to turne vnto the Lorde, and
 no doubt but you shall find fauor, for yet with
 the Lord there is mercie, that he may bee fea-
 red. Otherwise, know and assure your selues,
 that if thorowe the pleasures of sinne which
 indure but for a while, your hearts shall bee
 hardened, and you either put the cuill day
 farre from you, or do not with speede turne
 vnto God, in a holy conuersation and amend-
 ment of life, you and yours shall both feele
 the hande of God pursuing you in this life,
 and eternally perish in that which is to come.
 Good and bad are this day propounded vnto
 you, and the way of life and death set before
 your eyes, Looke well to it, and beware that
 the Lord haue not iust occasion thorow your
 carelesse and contempt of his trueth, to say,
 Thy destruction, O Israhell, is of thy selfe; I
 knowe that the waies and the workes of a
 mans life, are not in his owne hands or pow-
 er, but that it is God that worketh in vs, bo-
 the will and the deed according to his o-
 good pleasure. Notwithstanding, sith
 hath beene so gracious to offer, let no



MUSEVM
BRITAN-
NICVM



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3

Ort, yet a true and faithfull
narration of the fearesfull fire that fell
in the towne of *Woburne*, in the coun-
tie of Bedford, on Saturday the 13.
of September last, An-
no 1593.

Together with a Christian admonition
asto the particular people of that place, &
to the inhabitants of the whole Land, to make
profitable and good use of the same, as
likewise of all iudgements past, as
of those that are feared may
justly fall upon us for
our sinnes.



Psal. 19. Vers. 16.

The Lord is knowne by executing iudgement: the wicked is snared in the worke of his owne hands, *Haggai. 2. 22.*

Psal. 119. letter T adds Vers. 137.

Righteous art thou, O Lord, and iust are thy iudgements.

Prov. 19. Vers. 25.

Smite a scorner, and the foolish will beware: and reprove the prudent, and he will vnderstand knowledge.

AT LONDON,
Printed by the Widdow Otwin, for
Thomas Man. 1595.

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1711.1 A T 2

1711.1 A T 2



TO THE HONORABLE, AND HIS VERIE
GOOD LL. SIR IOHN POPHAM

Knight, Lord chiefe Iustice of England, and Sir
William Periam Knight, Lord chiefe Baron
of her Maiesties Court of Exchequer,

*T. W. hartily wisbeth the abundant
riches of al Gods mercies in this life,
& eternal blessednes in that
which is to come thro-
row Christ.*



*Though I doubt not (my good
Lords) but that you haue ere this
heard of the feareful and lamen-
table fire, that in September last
light vpon the towne of VVoo-
burne, in the countie of Bedford, and am fullie
perswaded, that according to the measure of
heauenly wisdom, that God hath vouchsafed
to you both, you haue made spirituall profit, not
only thereof, but of sundry other such like iudg-
ments past alreadie, in diuers quarters of our
kingdom, and iustly feared, that hereafter may*

THE EPISTLE

fall out vpon vs for our sinnes: yet because the particularities of that punishment are not so wel and certainly knowne as were meete, mens minds are so various, and fame increaseth by going, as wee say in the Prouerbe, besides that euen in those things, likewise there is a trueth fit to be vnderstood, & also because the generalitie of men, either see them not, because they are blind, or els bee amazed at the for a while, because they haue no further insight, or else make not good vse of them, because they are of carelesse hearts, I haue thought it fit, and that vnder your Lordshippes protections, and with your good acceptation also I trust, to publishe though a short, yet a true narration of that pitifull spectacle, and therewithall, some meditations of mine owne concerning that matter begunne within a daye or two after the afore-named fire it selfe, and finished in howe short a space I will not write, least I might seeme to vaunt. In regard of the matter, I haue aimed at nothing but this, that the trueth it selfe being laide open, and some obseruations made thereupon, men might bee lead by the hande to make some profitable vse of it, they being drawne on to repentance for that which is past, and carefully to looke to themselves for that
which

DEDICATORIE.

which is to come, least otherwise the flame of Gods wrath should break forth further against vs, and that to our vtter wasting and destruction. For the manner obserued in this discourse, it is not so methodicall I confesse, as it should be: but the reason thereof was the sodain feare and great grieve, that I conceiued vpon the very viewe and sight of the ruines it had made, all making me unfit indeed for that present, especiallie for matter or manner to handle such a subiect, as it ought, both the one and the other then tooke such a deepe impression in me, and that is the reason also and nothing else I assure you, why I seeme as it were so confusedly to deale in the cause, for how can a dis-tempered mind be fit, especially in methode to propound any matter, sith that to the orderlie deliuerie of thinges, there must of necessitie concurre a quiet hart, and a staied head. Howbeit this I dare notwithstanding protest, that for the bodie of the treatie, there is in it nothing unsound or vncertaine, and therefore in that respect may the more safely be receiued. As for the reasons leading me to present this little labour to your Lordships, though they bee many & the same waightie also, yet take them I beseech you, in a worde as it were. You haue

THE EPISTLE

vouchsafed me sundry honorable fauours, and I would not willingly seeme or be thought, either unmindfull of them, or vnthankfull for them in any dutie that God hath or shalbe pleased to inable me to performe. You execute the iustice of the land, nay which is more, the verie iustice of God himselfe, euen deriued from himselfe, by her Maiesties holy hand and power. How fit therefore it is, that his example should bee set before you, whose person you doe in some sort beare, and whose iudgement also you execute in your functions, that so you might in your places tread also in some good measure in his pathes, your selues can more wisely iudge, than I am able to relate. You both professe the holy gospell of Christ, and may in some sort and sense be reckoned amongst them, that mourne for your owne sinnes, and for the transgressions of the land also. How meet it is, that you and others with you shuld see, that you haue not taken up this lamentation without cause, as wel for that which is past & present, as for that which is feared to come. But I will repressse my selfe in these thinges, and will not cease according to all the graces that I haue receiued frō God, to commend these causes into his most mercifull hands, who only worketh wonderful things
both

DEDICATORIE.

both in heauen and in earth, that so turning
vs from our euil waies vnto himselfe, and knit-
ting our harts daily more and more vnto him,
wee may haue assured hope of the bettering of
our estate in this life according to his owne
good pleasure, or at the least of the euerlasting
sauiug of our soules, notwithstanding all the
troubles and turmoiles that may fal out in the
world. The Lord alwaies and in all things al-
so direct your Lordships both by his holy spirite,
and untill the daye of Christ make perfecte in
you all good works that hee hath begun for the
prosperitie of Sion, or the commoditie of the
common wealth, to his glorie, and your

euerlasting comforte thorowe

Christ. London the 1. of

November.

1595.

Your Lordships bounden and readie euer in Iesus
Christ, *Tho Wilcocks*, the Lords vnworthie.

DEDICATION

God in his mercy hath made us
capable of his love and grace
and hath made us his children
and we may have a share in the blessing of
our estate in this life according to his will
good pleasure, or as the word of the Lord
bearing of our fathers, now will standing at the
threshold of eternity that may fall out in the
world. I do heartily desire that all things
should be done to the glory of God
and that the name of Christ may be
honoured in all things and in all places
for the glory of God the Father
and the Son, and the Holy Spirit
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

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A short narration of the feare-
full fire, that fell in the towne of
Wooburne, in the Countie of Bed-
ford, on Saturdaie, the 13. of
September last.

1595.

Lord Iesus begin and make an ende.



EN, brethren and fa-
thers, yea & whosoe-
uer amongst you tru-
ly feareth God, vnfa-
inedly loueth his lawe,
stedfastly beleeueth
his promises, and sin-
cerely obeieth his wil

to you, and to euery one of you, I say, are the
words of trueth, and exhortation following
directed: not of a hatefull heart I assure you
against any, for I wish & would labour your
good generally, and especially the saluation
of

of your soules, as mine owne : nor yet of a minde curious in other mens causes, with the neglect of them that belong to my selfe, for I know it to bee displeasing before God, and vnprofitable to my selfe, but of an earnest desire in christian charitie, by al meanes lawfull, and that according to my vttermoſt abilitie, to assay to doe good vnto others, as vnto mine owne soule, and to labour what I can, the setting forth of his glory, that hath created vs and placed vs in this worlde, for that speciall end and purpose, that so at the last also, after we haue a little glorified him here, we might thorough his mercie, and Christs merites, obtaine the fruition of cuerlasting life, and the immortall glorification of our bodies and soules, in that great and last day. Wherein, if either thorow the vncleanenes of my heart, or the pollution of my hands, or thorow any other weakenes or want in mee, or of mee, I shall misse of my purpose : or else thorow the carelesnesse, contempt, or any other corruption besides, of those into whose hands this treatise shall come, these poore labors shall not sort these desired effects, I shall for mine own and their transgressions (which are lettes and hinderances to so worthe a worke) mourne

in my soule in secret, to see or heare the hand of God come forth so heauilie against vs for our sinnes, and yet I shall againe comfort my selfe, as well as I can, not onely in this of heathen men, that in great and hard matters to haue a will is sufficient, but especially in that heauenly speech of the holy apostle, that God (if there be first a willing & cheerefull mind) accepteth vs according to that wee haue, and not according to that we haue not: this being alwaies prouided also, that that good, whether it bee of affection, or of action, that wee haue, we haue from him, who worketh in vs both the will and the deede, according to his own good pleasure, and therefore will accept it in vs, as his own good worke, notwithstanding our imperfections and defects cleauing thereto.

What a fearefull fire fell in the towne of *wooburne*, in the Countie of *Bedford*, on Saturday, as they call it, the thirteenth of September last past, sundrie of the people there felt, to their extreame losses, yea vtter vndooing, diuers did behold to their great griefe, and many haue heard of, euen to the sorrow of their hearts. This was so much the more lamentable, not onely because it burnt vp sundrie

drie houses, & baies of building, to the number as I take it, of some hundred and thirtie, one with another such as they were, of dwelling howses, and out houses, as barnes, stables, houels, and such like, but also because it consumed whatsoeuer store was laide vp in the same, as corne, hey, wood, ferne, and such other like prouision, for man and for beast, for the backe and the bellie, to bake and to brew with, and for such other both necessarie vse, and profitable maintenance: yea (which may adde to & increase the pitifulnes of the spectacle, and the very matter of the narration it selfe) not only many things within the houses, being almost vtterly spoyled, broken to peeces and consumed, as tables, stooles, bedstedes, wainscot, presses, glasse in the windowes, pewter, brasse, copper, leather, and such like, but euen of that which was caried into the streetes to saue it, if it might be, frō the force of the fire, as linnen, bedding, platters, dishes, kettles, much stolen away, and sundrie sortes of ware, of the traders of the towne, as frise, durance, sheewes, and such like, purloyned & imbeceled. By meanes whereof it cometh to passe, that the most of them are greatlie weakened, as in respect of that poore estate

worldly

worldly, which before they enioyed, yea that
 diners of them hauing their store and proui-
 sion consumed, and as it were eaten vp with
 the flame of the fire, hardly haue for theselues,
 their wiues, children, and seruants, breade to
 slake hunger, drinke to coole thirst, wood to
 warme them with all, or houses to hide their
 heads in, I will not say conuenient (for that
 were a great mercie in this iudgement) but
 not such as ouer head, are able to keepe out
 the raine, snow, and other moysture that fal-
 leth frō heauen, or on the sides to beate backe
 the boysterous windes, and cold ayre, this in-
 deede being rather wrought, by the indiscre-
 tion or rage of some, that came in to succor
 and helpe their distresse, by bursting in peeces
 the tiles of the house, and breaking downe
 walles, windowes, glasse, and all (and yet no
 doubt of it, ment to doe their best indeuours,
 for ayde and reliefe) than by the violence or
 vehemencie of the fire.

Many I doubt not, are greatly egar, and
 greedie as it were, to heare of, and to vnder-
 stand the meane whereby this miserable fire,
 and fearefull flame was inkindled: which de-
 sire of theirs, as I cannot mislike, if it bee free
 from new fanglednes and curiositie, and haue
 this

their owne : as also that God revealeth not the finnes of the people vnto his faithful seruants the Prophets by the haltes, I think you would, or at the least I am sure you should be of another mind. To reckon vp all the particulars were harde and impossible, for who can vnderstande his faulces? And yet not to lay downe some, were to faile in the iustifying of the charge, which were vniust, and to let you alone in your iniquities, which should be vcharitable. This therefore I say, that amongst the infinite and innumerable finnes of your soules, there are some particulars that haue beene and are most odious before God, and most apparant in the view of the world. Amongst which I reckon in the first place a fearefull contempt of godlines in the most of you, and a great and grieuous carelesnesse thereof even in the best. How often and long hath God spoken vnto you, by the publike ministerie of his worde, in the holy exercises of prayer, preaching, administration and participation of his blessed sacraments? If you could haue seene your happines in that behalfe, both for the length of them, & the graces of the men that God vsed as meanes to publish his truth vnto you, your fauours both

waies not farre inferior to any congregation
of the land, and in these respects indeede go-
ing before many it had beene well: but how
little you haue profited by them, may howe
carelesly you haue heard them, & how cold-
ly you haue frequented them, your grosse ig-
norance in the grounds of Christian religion
sheweth the first, fewe or none of you being
able to render a reason thereof, to them that
shall aske you, & your sleeping in the church,
talking one with another, and turning of
your bookes there, and vsing of your owne
priuate deuotions or prayers in the time of
publike preaching & prayer, a grieuous trans-
gression no doubt proueth the second: and
your dayly and continuall absence therfrom,
and specially vpon the Lordes day then lying
in your beds, haunting of alehouses, riding
and going abroad for your worldly affaires
of pleasure and profite manifesteth the third.
And how weary you are when you are there
let this testifie: none preuent the time of pub-
like assemblies, and some come in the midst
of your exercises, to the great disturbance of
the same, and others that are there: and that
some againe before the sermons are finished,
other some after the prayers made, and be-
fore

fore the singing of the Psalm, and the vsuall blessing to bee pronounced departe thence, wherof you as well as they that tarrie should be partakers, posting also out of the Church, as it were frō a play or may game, as though you supposed, that no more reuerence should be shewed there than in other places, or that some parte of diuine seruice belonged vnto you and not other some, whereas in trueth you ought to be alike partakers of the whole. And how should wee looke for any goodnes where this that is the seede of sinne, and the nurse of all abominations swayeth so much? Surely when men haue once cast Gods lawe behind their backes, and haue it not in deede in a high and reuered regard, what can there bee to restraine them from euill? or to direct them in good? Nay what shall not then bee right and lawfull, though indeede it bee neuer so corrupt and vile. From this therfore, as from a streame and fountaine of filthinesse, haue flowed all your othes, particular transgressions, as first for example your swearing and cursing: by the first blaspheming of Gods name, and haling down wrath and vengeance from the Lord vpon your selues, your wiues, children, familie, friends, yea all the goodes
and

and cattle that you haue and possesse, for the Lord will not hold him guiltlesse that taketh his name in vaine, and sure wee are that the plague of God shal not depart from the house of the swearer: as also wee may perceiue by the signe of the flying booke mentioned Zachar. 5. in which were contained curses against euery one that sweareth, who also should be cut off as wel on this side, as on that: yea that this iudgement should enter into, and remaine in the midst of such swerers houses, and should consume the same with the timber thereof, and stones thereof. And by the second not onely testifying the malice and madnes of your owne harts, against men and other creatures of G O D, vpon which you powre out the poyson of your mindes and monthes, but drawing iniquitie with the cordes of vanitie, and sinne as it were with cart ropes, that so that might bee fulfilled in you, that in the book of Psalmes is spoken of the notorious wicked, As hee loued cursing, so shall it come vnto him, and as he loued not blessing so shall it be farre from him: and as hee clothed himselfe with cursing like a rayment, so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oyle into his bones. And by

both of them defiling the aire aboue you, and polluting the earth beneath you, with the creatures thereupon, yea by your bad examples, infecting and corrupting your wiues, children, seruants, and all that haue any conuersation or acquaintance with you, who haue nothing to learne from you but that which is euill, will in the pronenesse of their owne nature to naughtinesse, easily treade in your bad steps, and much more easily resemble you in corruption, than other men in goodnes, by how much you doe more nightly and straightly by many waies touch them than others. And as for your owne idlenes, and the bad bringing vp of your youth and children, both sonnes and daughters, it is pitifull to beholde, and I cannot without great grieffe of heart, thinke or speake of it: what a shame before men, nay indeede what sinne is it before God, to see amongst you day labourers and men of manuell occupations (who according to Gods ordinance, and his iust punishment vpon them for sinne, shuld eat their bread in the sweate of their browes, and get it as wee say with their fingers endes) haunt and frequent alehouses, spending there not onely houres, but dayes, and in that time be-

sides the neglect of their callings, by which they should maintaine themselves and theirs, waiting that also which they haue gotten, & should be as the reward of their honest labors, for the necessary and needfull reliefe of their wiues, children, and other at home, where they should rather spend it in deede, to the increase of mutuall comforte amongst themselves, than vpon the sonnes of *Beliall*, and wicked and lewd persons in those houses of vnrchristians, yea some of them of dishonesty? Now for your youth, is it not lamentable to see boies and girles, of tenne, twelue, yea a fourteene yeares of age, and many vnder these yeares also, to swarme in your streetes, and to runne vp and downe daily in mire and dirt, both wearing out their shooes, and spoiling their apparell, and that without laying their hands to any honest labours to get something to wards their maintenance and reliefe? Yea and some of them I feare me that follow not this bad trade, worse occupied by much, in pilfering, breaking of hedges, learning to lie, sware, and make no conscience of anie thing. And as for those few that you seeme to put to learning, if you consider the places whither they goe, the persons to whome (I

neede not particularize this, for you knowe
 what I meane) and the small profite they take
 thereby, it were almost as small a transgressi-
 on before God and men, to let them liue idly
 with the rest, as to traine them vp in sorte as
 they are. God hath graciously provided far
 better for you, if you could either see it or
 haue ease and conscience to vse it well. As
 for your selues, you haue long agoe done
 what you could to put religion from you, by
 offering not onely manifold vnkindneses to
 the persons that offered it vnto you, but con-
 tempt to the truth it selfe, and yet though it
 be full sore against your willes, it is by hono-
 rable, and others, and those that loue you, and
 care for you more than your selues, vphelde
 still. And now what got you about, namely
 to banish learning from you and yours? Per-
 haps you will think it a hard charge, but sure-
 ly it appeareth not onely by this, that you suf-
 fer your schoolehouse, the place appointed
 for the good bringing vp of your youth, to
 goe to soule decay, but haue no regarde at all
 in a manner that they might attaine to some
 good measure of knowledge: a humane lear-
 ning, what will bee the issue considering a
 word. Contempt of the worde carieth with

it alwaies all maner of impietie : and lacke of
 knowledge, breedeth all barbarousnes : and
 then what can you look for, but euen to haue
 that fulfilled in you, that the scripture spea-
 keth of a rebellious and stifnecked people, E-
 phraim shall eate vp Manassch, and Manassch
 Ephraim, and so yon to become a sauage and
 wilde people deuoid of pietie, charitie, religi-
 on, righteousnesse, loue, &c. and filled with
 all manner of vngodlines and sinne, to which
 as seemeth to me by your crooked paths, you
 haue made more than post haste already. And
 though God by many crosses and losses laide
 vpon you and yours, labor to stay you there-
 from, and particularly hath plagued almost al
 of you, with great and grieuous pouertie,
 (more I am sure than many of you will bee
 knowne of) so that (some few of you excep-
 ted) you liue for the most part by shifting, if
 not vn honest deuises and trades: yet you will
 not see the hand that striketh you with beg-
 gerie as it were, and contempt for your idle-
 nes and carelesnes, and so turne vnto him, but
 shifting it from your selues vnto others, vn-
 iustly laye the fault vpon those that in manie
 respects haue been but too bountifull and be-
 neficial vnto you and yours. And yet I would

euen from the bottome of my heart, if GOD
 saw it so good, that your iniquitie and sinne
 had staied here, and had not proceeded fur-
 ther. But surely it is farre otherwise with you:
 for as the godly thorow the light of God his
 truth, and the powerful working of his blef-
 sed spirite, are mightilie caried from faith to
 faith, & frō one good work to an other, so are
 you in Satans malice against you, and the
 strength of your owne corruption violently
 harried from one transgression to another e-
 uill, that so that may be true in you, that the
 Apostle speaketh. The wicked must waxe
 worse and worse, and filling vp the measure
 of their transgressions, bee at the last over-
 whelmed with his most fearefull and iust
 iudgements. What shall I say of your exces-
 siue drinking, abusing therein and therewith
 that and many other his good creatures, gi-
 uen you sometimes for necessitie especially,
 and some times for delight also, I confesse?
 yea, is it not written in many of your faces
 and foreheads, so that hee that regardeth but
 the rednes of your eyes, the heate of your
 countenances, the swelling of your vaines,
 and sundry such other outward signes of in-
 temperancie, might with small a doe poynte
 and

and painte out, what manner of men you are,
 and as if it were with great capitall letters
 written in your foreheads, so as hee that run-
 neth may reade the same, see and behold bou-
 ling and quaffing written therein? And yet
 herein is this your sinne amongst others, be-
 come exceedingly sintull, that many of you
 leaue your owne houses, and go vp & down
 to other places for strong drinke and compa-
 ny, and not contented therewith, you delight
 to drawe others from townes and places a-
 broad and rounde about you, to be partakers
 with you of the selfe same iniquitie, and that
 not onely vpon your market and fayre daies,
 and times of resort, but euen vpon other daies
 of the weeke, yea vpon the Lords day it selfe,
 wherein you are so farre off from withstan-
 ding euill, that not one of you yet for ought
 I knowe, hath been found either to repress
 this foule vice of quaffing and drunkenness in
 your selues, or to shut your doores against
 them that fall into riot and excesse that way.
 Adde vnto these, the adulteries, whoredomes
 and fearefull filthineses that haue heretofore,
 and daylie doe fall out amongst you, and then
 you shall see also, whether God haue cause-
 leslie stricken you, with this and other iudge-
 ments:

ments : or whether you haue not indeede good cause for the same , vnfeinedly and speedily to humble your selues least otherwise the wrath begun , proceede and breake forth , to an vtter wasting of you and yours. For your secret sinner that way, I will say nothing, but leaue them to God to whome they are best knowne, and to your owne hearts, which should bee touched with a godly sorrow for them, and for your other iniquities likewise. Consider a little I pray you of your open transgressions, and waigh them for amendment of life. Divers of your daughters and maidseruants, haue beene in former time and of late, shamefully defiled. Your sonnes and other of your families, haue been the authors and the actors of this grieuous villanie, wherein also sundry of them haue growne to this shamelesnesse in their sinne, that they haue gone with out-stretched necks, and brassen foreheads, as though they had done none iniquitie at all. Your towne by this mernes too much impouerished alreadie, hath beene charged with the keeping of a bastardlye broode, beside other foule inconueniences that haue followed & flowen from this grieuous transgression. To reckon vp the rest

of your iniquities would bee to too tedious,
 by these labour to learne, to loth, and to leane
 them, and all the other whatsoever, & found-
 ly and speedily to turne vnto the Lorde, and
 no doubt but you shall find fauor, for yet with
 the Lord there is mercie, that he may bee fer-
 red: Otherwise, know and assure yourselves,
 that if thorowe the pleasures of sinne which
 indure but for a while, your hearts shall bee
 hardened, and you either put the cuill day
 farre from you, or do not with speede turne
 vnto God, in a holy conuersation and amend-
 ment of life, you and yours shall both fee-
 le the hande of God pursuing you in this life,
 and eternally perish in that which is to come.
 Good and bad are this day propounded vnto
 you, and the way of life and death set before
 your eyes, Looke well to it, and beware that
 the Lord haue not iust occasion thorow your
 carelesse and contempt of his trueth, to say,
 Thy destruction, O Israel, is of thy selfe, I
 knowe that the waies and the workes of a
 mans life, are not in his owne hands or pow-
 er, but that it is God that worketh in vs, both
 the will and the deed according to his owne
 good pleasure. Notwithstanding, sith hee
 hath beene so gracious to offer, let not vs be
 so

souereltesse as to refuse, least otherwise
 we prouoke him to lift vp his hand against
 vs, and to sweare that we shall not enter into
 his eternall rest. And that which in the singu-
 lar of my soule, and in some particular band,
 - I say vnto yon, I doe in the largenes of my
 heart, speake and wish vnto the whole
 land, whose peace and prosperitie
 I will pray for, & to my vtter-
 most (God assisting me)
 procure, al the daies
 of my life.

FINIS.



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